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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000795

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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT LULA REITERATES BRASILIA'S SUPPORT FOR  
HAITI DURING BRIEF STOP IN PORT-AU-PRINCE

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Brazilian President Ignacio Lula da Silva visited Haiti for seven hours on May 28. meeting at length with President Preval and other senior Haitian officials. He reiterated his nation's support for Haiti and announced that it would build a major dam for the generation of hydroelectric power. Lula pressed Preval on the current political vacuum here, but got only limited assurances on the status of PM-designate Manuel in return. The Brazilian leader also underscored his nation's intention to continue its participation in MINUSTAH, announcing that an additional 100 engineers would be dispatched to Haiti. Lula took Preval to visit the Brazilian troops currently serving in Haiti. The two sides signed six cooperation agreements, highlighting Brazilian assistance in ag development, education, health, and social issues. Subsequent to the visit, Preval told me that he was very pleased with the trip. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The seven hour visit of Brazilian President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva to Port-au-Prince on May 28 was, by all accounts, a major success. Both Haitian and Brazilian officials tell us that they are pleased with the outcome of the long-awaited visit, noting that the two sides were able to move closer on key issues. In addition to the one-on-one presidential meeting, the visit included a ceremony where the two sides signed six cooperation agreements, a quasi-press conference, and a joint visit to Brazilian troops serving with MINUSTAH. The agreements included accords on visa reciprocity, technical and educational cooperation, establishment of an experimental agricultural station, and an agreement on agricultural security planning. The two sides also agreed to develop a means to combat violence against women. Lula, who traveled with ten of his ministers, appeared in a jovial mood, often throwing his arms around his Haitian host. Following the accords ceremony, Preval (as is his wont) waffled on whether the two should speak to the press, but gave in when the Brazilian delegation observed that their president was already talking to the assembled journalists.

¶3. (C) Brazilian Ambassador Igor Kippman (protect) told me that the two leaders hit it off well, their one-on-one meeting running an hour, much longer than scheduled. According to a read-out he received from Brazilian FM Amorin, the session in Preval's private office was warm and congenial. Lula "very, very diplomatically" broached the issue of Haiti's long-delayed senatorial elections and expressed Brazil's concern about the continuing political vacuum in Haiti. Preval said that he was cautiously hopeful Bob Manuel would be confirmed as Prime Minister, but said he foresaw a fight ahead. He was evasive about his own efforts on Manuel's behalf. Preval committed to go forward with elections, but offered no time frame. The two further discussed concessional financing, agricultural development and the current food crisis. Lula pledged to work with the donor committee at the FAO meetings in Rome to help Haiti

out, noting that he is hosting a two hour meeting on Haiti along the margins of the Rome session. Preval pressed Brazil to provide Haiti with infrastructure support, including roads.

¶4. (C) Kippman reported that in the broader meeting, Preval pressed Lula for "tractors, not tanks" (a familiar turn of phrase) to address Haiti's economic development needs. While expressing appreciation for Brazil's important contribution to MINUSTAH, Preval said the threat to Haiti has changed over the past year. Haiti now faces a socio-economic challenge, rather than a security crisis. He urged MINUSTAH to take on a significant development element and asked Brazil to lead the way. Lula offered to build a hydro-electric dam over the next three years and committed to plussing up the Brazilian military engineer contingent here by 100 members. Kippman will travel to Brasilia shortly to begin technical negotiations on the dam project and will be joined in mid-June by Haitian officials from the Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Agriculture and EDH. Preval will then visit Brasilia on August 13 to sign the final agreement for the dam. Lula and his delegation also agreed to examine ways to broaden his government's support for Haiti's health and education sectors and will be shoring up its school canteen program. (Note. As an aside, we note that the Haitian delegation at this session was short a Prime Minister, lame duck PM Alexis having called in sick at the last moment. Bob Manuel remained in his office for the day. According to Kippman, the lack of a PM made for some uncomfortable moments around the meeting room as the two delegations waited for their principals to emerge. End Note.)

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¶5. (C) In a brief meeting with the diplomatic corps after the press conference, Lula - with Preval at his side - said that he would use the FAO Rome Meeting to highlight the current food crisis' impact on Haiti. Drawing on what were clearly prepared talking points, he told me he wanted to underscore to the participants that biofuels were not taking food out of the mouths of the poor. Instead science offered the possibility of increased production to feed the world. Lula added that he wanted to make sure that the world clearly understood that the crisis was not due to recent shifts to biofuels.

¶6. (C) Following lunch, the two presidents visited the Brazilian base near the airport, a stop that Lula insisted that his host make. (Kippman says Preval tried to duck the visit, but was unable to do so.) The next day, Haitian newspaper readers were treated to pictures of the two presidents in Brazilian military berets, Preval looking decidedly uncomfortable. UN SRSG Ambassador Hedi Annabi, who accompanied the two presidents to the base, reported that the Brazilian President told his troops that Brazil remains committed to the mission here "as long as MINUSTAH needs us." He furthermore committed his country to mobilize the Latin neighbors. The Brazilian Minister of Defense also told Annabi that he wanted to make it "absolutely clear" that Brazil would remain engaged militarily; there was no question of pulling out.

¶7. (C) Along the fringes of Preval's meeting AID/LAC AA Jose Cardenas (reported septel) the following day, Preval told me that the Lula visit had gone "very, very, very well." He noted that the Brazilians are moving quickly to address Haiti's electrical problems, which he hoped will make some impact on the country's deteriorating electrical grid. He did question if Brazil can put together the hydro-electrical project by the time he arrives in Brasilia August 13, but expressed optimism that Lula would deliver.  
SANDERSON